

Remarks

After entry of the subject amendment, claims 1, 5, 7-9, and 15 will be pending in the application with claims 1 and 15 being in independent form. More specifically, claims 1, 5, and 15 have been amended and claims 10 and 13-14 have been cancelled. Claims 2-4, 6, and 11-12 were previously cancelled. Claims 7-9 remain unchanged.

Claims 1, 5, 7-10, and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, first paragraph, as introducing new matter not adequately described in the specification. In particular, the Examiner objects to the “dry bonding film” as set forth in claims 1, 5, and 15, for example. These claims have been amended to remove the objected language such that this §112 rejection is believed overcome.

Claims 1, 10, and 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Constantine (U.S. Patent No. 3,655,474) in view of Garnish (U.S. Patent No. 3,634,169) and Hall (U.S. Patent No. 5,457,149). Claims 1, 5, 7, 10, and 13-15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bauer in view of Constantine, Garnish, and Hall. Claims 5, 7, 8, 9, and 14 also stand rejected under various combinations using Constantine.

Applicant has cancelled the apparatus claims 10 – 14 to focus the Examiner's attention on the unique and non-obvious method of the subject invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 15. In particular, the subject invention requires the simultaneous operation of:

- applying heat and pressure to the woven fabric to impart a semi-permanent stretch into the fabric,

- compressing the synthetic thermoplastic interlining fabric to introduce compressive shrinkage, and

- bonding the woven fabric, bonding agent, and interlining fabric together while the fabrics and the bonding agent are in the compressed state.

In other words, the interlining passes through the machine at the same time as the woven fabric and the two are bonded together while in their respective compressed states. This particular simultaneous operation has the advantage that the interlining used may be of less stretchable and much less expensive material.

The prior art of record, including Constantine, does not disclose, teach suggest this simultaneous operation. Constantine discloses a composite fabric comprising a shell fabric

and a backing fabric. The backing fabric is very restricted and requires longitudinally disposed rows of knitted loops on one side while the interior or bonded surfaces comprise a plurality of diagonally disposed connecting elements. The fabrics are compressed and then subsequently cured (see column 4, lines 43-50). The backing fabric in Constantine has this specific structure in order to prevent delamination (see column 2, lines 22-25), which occurs when longitudinally compressing laminate structures.

The method according to the claimed invention overcomes the problem of delamination while allowing a much wider range of backing fabrics to be used. This is achieved through the simultaneous compressing of the fabric layers and bonding them together with the bonding film. Such a simultaneous action overcomes the delamination problem as differences in longitudinal compressive shrinkage occur while the layers are being bonded together. As mentioned above, this solution to this problem is not disclosed in Constantine. In fact, Constantine is directed to an alternative solution to this problem which is more complex and requires the very limited range of backing fabric to be used.

In sum, Applicant contends that Constantine does not disclose, teach, or suggest the invention as claimed in independent claims 1 and 15 and that the remaining references do not provide the requisite teaching to find the claimed invention. As such, independent claims 1 and 15 are believed allowable. Claims 5 and 7-9 are also allowable as these claims depend from the novel and non-obvious features of claim 1.

The remaining references cited but not applied to the claims have been considered. Since the Examiner has apparently considered these references as less pertinent than the above discussed reference(s), further discussion of the non-applied references, at this time, is considered unnecessary. However, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the subject patent application patentably define over all references of record either independently or in combination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Application, as amended, is now presented in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. The Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 08-2789 for any fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

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